

Proceedings of The International Congress of Siraf Port

November 14-16, 2005

Bushehr-Iran

Congress President : Esmael Tabadar

Congress Secretary : Abdolkarim Mashayekhi



بنیاد ایرانشناسی
شعبه بوشهر



دانشگاه علوم پزشکی
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URL: <http://www.sirafcongress.ir>



Domestic Architecture

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Abstract

Istakhri, writing about 340/951, described in glowing terms the houses of the wealthiest residents of Siraf: "[The houses] are of teak and other wood from Africa and have several stories [Some] residents ... spend 30,000 dinars on building a house and surrounding it with gardens."

During the excavations of 1386/1966- 1392/1973, we investigated several of the residences that impressed Istakhri. These included a palace, part of a residential area and other domestic buildings. In almost every case, the building had more than one period of construction and we concluded that building plots were redeveloped at fairly frequent intervals.

All permanent buildings at Siraf were constructed of stone and mortar. The houses had square or rectangular plans. On the ground floor, one or two entrances gave access to a courtyard, which was surrounded by rooms. Although nothing remained in situ, we found evidence of houses with two or three stories, as Istakhri described.

The lecture describes the archaeological evidence for the character of domestic architecture at Siraf and its development over more than 200 years.